

Serial No. 10/718,670  
Attorney Docket No. 01-520RCE

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

The present listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1.-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A map search system, comprising:

a map data storing unit for storing a plurality of stored information items, wherein each of the plurality of stored information items are stored by being divided into being assigned to one of a plurality of possible search areas;

an area-designating information storage unit for storing a plurality of area-designating information items, each of the plurality of stored area-designating information items identifying one of the plurality of search areas;

a designating unit for designating one of the plurality of a first search area areas as a target search area for retrieval, the first search area being chosen from the plurality of possible search areas;

a retrieving unit ~~for~~ configured to search the target search area and retrieve ~~retrieving an one of the plurality of stored information item items assigned to the target search area, only within the target search area;~~

~~a switching information storing unit for storing a plurality of switching information items with which the plurality of search areas are associated; and~~

an input unit for receiving an input item, the input item including a search area-designating information item; and

a switching determination unit for determining whether the search area-designating item identifies the target search area;

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a search-area switching unit for switching the target search area from ~~a certain the first~~ search area ~~previously designated by the designating unit into a given~~ to a second search area associated with ~~the search area-designating a given switching-information item~~, when the ~~switching determination unit determines that the search area-designating item does not identify the target search area, given switching-information item is designated by an input item the~~ second search area being chosen from the plurality of possible search areas.

9. (Currently Amended) The map search system of Claim 8,  
wherein the plurality of ~~switching information stored area-designating~~ items include information items that indicate areas, each of which is capable of designating one of the plurality of possible search areas.

10. (Currently Amended) The map search system of Claim 8, further comprising:  
an address-book storing unit for storing at least names that relate to positions and are associated with the plurality of ~~switching information stored area-designating~~ items,  
wherein the search-area switching unit switches the target search area from the ~~certain first~~ search area into the ~~given second~~ search area based on a ~~switching information the search area-designating~~ item associated with one of the names that is inputted.

11. (Currently Amended) The map search system of Claim 8, further comprising:  
a communicating unit for communicating with a portable storage medium that includes an address-book storing unit for storing at least names that relate to positions and are associated with the plurality of ~~switching information stored area-designating~~ items,

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wherein the search-area switching unit switches the target search area from the ~~certain first search area into to the given second~~ search area based on a ~~switching information the search area-designating~~ item associated with one of the names that is inputted.

12. (Currently Amended) The map search system of Claim 8,  
wherein the search-area switching unit includes a notifying unit for notifying that the target search area is switched from the ~~certain first~~ search area ~~into to the given second~~ search area when the given ~~switching information search area-designating~~ item is designated by an input item.

13. (Currently Amended) The map search system of Claim 8,  
wherein the search-area switching unit switches back the target search area from the ~~given second~~ search area ~~into to the certain first~~ search area after a given period of time.

14. (Previously Presented) The map search system of Claim 8,  
wherein the map search system is adapted to a car navigation device.

15. (Currently Amended) A search area designating method used in a map search system that stores (i) a plurality of information items, ~~wherein each of the plurality of information items are stored by being divided into~~ assigned to one of a plurality of search areas, and (ii) a plurality of ~~switching information stored search area-designating items, each of the plurality of stored search area-designating items identifying one of with which the plurality of search areas are~~ associated, the search area designating method comprising:

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designating a ~~certain~~ first search area selected from of the plurality of search areas as a target search area for retrieval;

receiving an input item, the input item including a search area-designating information item;

determining whether the search area-designating information item identifies the target search area;

switching the target search area from the ~~designated certain~~ first search area ~~into to~~ a given second search area when the search area-designating information item is determined to not identify the target search area, the second search area being associated with a given switching-information the search area-designating information item, when the given switching-information item is designated by an input item the second search area being selected from the plurality of search areas; and

searching the target search area to retrieve one of the plurality of ~~retrieving an~~ information items ~~item, only within the target search area.~~